



CHADD's Advocacy & Public Policy Committee Lunch and Learn Webinar Series

THE STAKES FOR AMERICANS WITH ADHD ARE HIGHER THAN EVER ADHD Policy Briefing: The Impact of Federal Proposals on People with ADHD

Call to Action

We are at a critical moment for the millions of American children and adults who live with ADHD.

Recent federal actions raise serious questions as to the continued availability of essential healthcare, educational supports, and resources for people with ADHD. These actions include the executive order establishing the [MAHA Commission](#), which appears to question the validity of ADHD diagnoses and treatments, and proposals to eliminate the United States Department of Education. CHADD calls on policymakers to ensure these critical supports remain available so individuals with ADHD can thrive in their health, education, and daily lives.

ADHD is a widespread, serious, and chronic condition that can have devastating consequences when left untreated. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 11% of children in the United States aged 3–17 have been diagnosed with ADHD, and researchers estimate that about 6% of adults also have the condition. Without access to evidence-based care and educational supports, individuals with ADHD face severe risks to their health, economic stability, and overall well-being.

For example, men with ADHD live an average of seven fewer years and women with ADHD live nine fewer years than their peers without ADHD. This is based on a [recent study](#), highlighted by the New York Times, that examined data from more than 30,000 adults in the United Kingdom. These findings are consistent with a growing body of research from several countries showing that untreated ADHD is linked to a shorter lifespan. Contributing factors include higher risks of substance use, accidents, self-harm, and other co-occurring health issues.

The economic impact of untreated ADHD is just as stark. Untreated ADHD costs the United States between \$143 billion and \$266 billion each year, with the burden falling across healthcare systems, workplaces, schools, and the criminal justice system.

Research supports a multimodal treatment approach—including medication, behavioral therapies like cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), education and work supports, and lifestyle modifications—as an effective way to manage ADHD and mitigate its associated health and economic impacts. The [National Institute of Mental Health's Multimodal Treatment Study of ADHD](#) found that combining medication with behavioral therapy led to significant improvements in ADHD symptoms, surpassing the effects of either treatment alone. Additionally, studies indicate that incorporating lifestyle changes, such as regular physical activity, can further enhance treatment outcomes. Supporting policies that ensure access to the full range of evidence-based interventions is critical to improving outcomes for people with ADHD.

Federal protections in education play an essential role in supporting students with ADHD. Children with

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ADHD rely on the Department of Education to issue guidance on and enforce access to services under [Section 504, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#), and other programs. Without these safeguards, students with ADHD are at risk of falling behind, facing discrimination, or being pushed out of the very systems meant to support them.

Therefore, we urge federal leaders to take immediate action. Specifically, we call on Congress and the Trump Administration to:

- **Defend access to FDA-approved treatments for ADHD** by rejecting proposals that limit or undermine evidence-based approaches to care.
- **Protect educational supports for students with ADHD** by maintaining the Department of Education and fully enforcing laws like Section 504 and IDEA.
- **Safeguard funding for ADHD and mental health research**, ensuring continued investment in the development and evaluation of effective interventions for both children and adults.
- **Preserve insurance coverage for ADHD care**, across public and private plans, so that individuals and families can access the treatments and services they need to thrive.

By recognizing the full scope of ADHD as a public health issue and supporting evidence-based treatment and education, we can significantly improve outcomes for individuals, families, and communities nationwide.

If these issues matter to you, now is the time to speak up. Contact your members of Congress and let them know you oppose efforts that would undermine ADHD care and roll back critical protections for students. Stay engaged with CHADD as we continue to monitor these developments and provide opportunities to act.

Together, we can protect the future of ADHD care and ensure every person has the chance to thrive.

Template Email for Emailing Members of Congress

Subject: Please Protect Services and Supports for People with ADHD

Dear [Representative/Senator] [Last Name]:

I'm writing as a constituent and as someone deeply concerned about recent federal proposals that threaten access to ADHD care, educational supports, insurance coverage, and research funding.

Millions of children and adults in the United States live with ADHD, a serious, chronic condition with serious health and economic consequences when left untreated. A large-scale study published in 2024 and featured earlier this year in the New York Times found that men with ADHD die seven years earlier, and women nine years earlier, than their peers without ADHD. Untreated ADHD is associated with increased risks of substance use, accidents, self-harm, and other serious conditions.

In addition to negative health outcomes, untreated ADHD costs the United States between \$143 billion and \$266 billion annually. These costs fall across our healthcare systems, schools, workplaces, and the criminal justice system.

Research shows that the most effective way to mitigate these outcomes is through a multimodal treatment approach, including medication, behavioral therapies like CBT, and lifestyle changes. These evidence-based strategies improve functioning and reduce long-term costs, but only if people can access them.

I am particularly concerned by:

1. The executive order establishing the MAHA Commission, which questions the legitimacy of ADHD diagnoses and treatment.
2. Proposals to eliminate or weaken the United States Department of Education, which plays a critical role in enforcing protections under Section 504 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

I urge you to:

- Defend access to FDA-approved treatments for ADHD, including rejecting efforts that limit evidence-based care.
- Protect educational supports by maintaining the Department of Education and enforcing Section 504 and IDEA.
- Safeguard funding for ADHD and mental health research, ensuring continued investment in evidence-based interventions.
- Preserve insurance coverage for ADHD care, across public and private plans, so individuals and families can access the services they need.

The ADHD community needs your leadership. Please stand up for policies that reflect science, protect students, and support public health.

Sincerely,

[Your Full Name]

[Your City, State]

[Optional: Include your personal connection to ADHD]

Template Script for Calling Member of Congress

Hi, my name is [Your Name], and I'm a constituent from [City, State].

I'm calling to ask [Representative/Senator Last Name] to protect access to ADHD care and services.

Millions of children and adults in the United States live with ADHD, and recent proposals—like the executive order creating the MAHA Commission and threats to eliminate the Department of Education—pose serious risks to their health, education, and well-being.

Research shows that the most effective way to mitigate these impacts is through a multimodal treatment approach, including medication, behavioral therapies like CBT, and lifestyle changes. These evidence-based strategies improve functioning and reduce long-term costs, but only if people can access them.

I'm asking [Representative/Senator Last Name] to:

- Defend access to FDA-approved ADHD treatments
- Protect the Department of Education and the enforcement of Section 504 and IDEA
- Safeguard federal funding for ADHD and mental health research
- Preserve insurance coverage for ADHD care under both public and private plans

These supports are essential to people with ADHD and their families, including mine. Please make sure our voices are heard. Thank you.
